

**Amendment to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this Application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Currently Amended)      An animal chew for chewing by an animal  
~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of:

    a body portion including an outer layer having a first hardness and a rigid supporting core, said body portion having first and second end sections with an edge section thereof; and

    an end piece including a raised ridge section and having a hardness that is greater than the first hardness, the end piece configured to engage with said outer layer of said body portion, wherein said raised ridge section of said end piece overlies and protects said edge section of said body portion from contact with said animal during said chewing via said raised ridge section, wherein the end piece configured to engage said body portion includes an opening, wherein said body portion having first and second end sections is configured to engage into and is received in said opening and wherein said opening in said end piece ~~opening~~ defines a diameter  $d_1$ , and said body portion having a first and second end section defines a diameter  $d_2$  at said first and second end section, and  $d_1 < d_2$ , wherein said body portion having a first and second end section with an edge thereof is configured to engage with said opening in said end piece, and wherein said opening compresses upon said end section when said edge section is engaged with said opening.

Claims 2-5. (Cancelled)

Claim 6. (Original)      The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said outer layer of said body portion comprises an elastomer.

Claim 7. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 6 wherein said outer layer comprises natural rubber.

Claim 8. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said first and second end pieces comprise a thermoplastic material.

Claim 9. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 8 wherein said first and second end pieces comprise a nylon material.

Claim 10. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said body portion comprises a core at least partially covered by said outer layer.

Claim 11. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 10 wherein said core comprises a nylon material.

Claim 12. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein at least one of said body portion and said first and second end pieces include a plurality of protrusions.

Claim 13. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 12 wherein said plurality of protrusions comprise conical protrusions.

Claim 14. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said body portion outer layer has a hardness on the Shore A Scale.

Claim 15. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said first and second end pieces have a hardness on the Shore D Scale.

Claim 16. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said first and second end piece and said first and second end of said body portion include at least one

cooperating hole, and said first and second end pieces are connected to said first and second end of said body portion by providing a dowel and extending said dowel through said cooperating holes in the respective first and second end piece and first and second end of said body portion.

Claim 17. (Previously Presented) The animal chew of claim 1 wherein the entirety of said body portion including said outer layer is made of an elastomer material.